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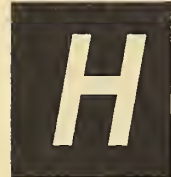
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CITE EXTENSION



From the
Communication, Information, and Technology Staff
Extension Service, USDA
Rm. 3328-S. Bldg., Washington, DC 20250-0900
FAX 202-475-5289
Phone 202-447-6145

May 1990 (Issue 1)



Hungarian Journalist Visits CIT

Eldon Fredericks

Extension's involvement in agricultural communication took a global turn during the May visit of **Tibor Veress** to CIT. Since 1981, Veress has been an editor, reporter, and journalist specializing in agriculture for the Hungarian Radio National Network. Veress, an engineering graduate of the Hungarian Agricultural University, began his broadcasting career at a regional radio studio.

Our staff and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) introduced him to

the educational mission of the USDA and the land-grant system. His visit to USDA agency information staffs was coordinated by the Department's Office of Public Affairs.

Learning Via Demonstrations

During his study tour Veress wants to learn how U.S. agriculture gains visibility on national and local radio and television. CIT public affairs staff member **Tom Willis** described U.S. radio/television rating systems,

and provided information about Extension's communication structure. **Nancy Sowers** gave an overview of cooperative publishing with states, and how informational materials are made available to the public through the Cooperative Extension System.

Kevin Gamble, IPA from Oregon State University, briefed Veress on new technology. Gamble demonstrated market news retrieval and hyper-text searches through manuscripts stored as computer text. NAL's **Robyn**

Frank reviewed the functions of the information centers established at NAL.

Learns New Concepts—Then Heads West

Veress' U.S. visit also included the University of Wisconsin, WGN radio/television in Chicago, and communicators in Iowa and California. Free exchange of agricultural information and the CES practice of combining communication and education were of particular interest to Veress.



Offers Hotline Info

The Food Safety and Inspection Service recently sent us a copy of *The Meat and Poultry Hotline: A Tool for the Prevention of Foodborne Illness*. This 18-page booklet is a day-by-day accounting of calls

(64,000) to the FSIS Meat and Poultry Hotline during Fiscal Year 1989. It also outlines the hotline's growth, major concerns—including poultry and egg storage and safety, product recalls, emerging

pathogens, inspections, labeling, microwave cooking, and a host of other food problems tackled by USDA experts.

This booklet can be a handy tool for knowing where to refer clients with

food safety concerns, and what kinds of questions have already been experienced by those who provide the answers. Copies were recently sent to state publications distribution officers and county offices.



CITE CLIPS

The April 1990 issue of *OPEDA News* contains the eulogy given for **Walter W. John** by his son, **Richard**. This moving and insightful work, entitled, simply, "Tribute," will serve as a printed reminder to Walter's

many friends of the attributes that made Walter special. We'll be glad to FAX this 1-1/2-page memorial tribute to any who are not on *OPEDA's* mailing list. Call **Jodi Horgan** at 202-447-6145.

M

et CIT

Public Affairs Specialist **Stu Sutherland** is a native of Iowa. He provides us with communication tricks and skills developed over 30 years. His know-how began after his graduation from the State University of Iowa, with a degree in Speech-TV. His career began at WOI-TV on the campus of Iowa State University in Ames, as a news cameraman. He also woke up Ames with an early morning radio show—without being awake himself.

Transfer South—And West

Stu and his young family (wife, **Jean**, and two baby girls) moved to Blacksburg, VA, for 4 years where, among motion pictures and other projects, he was the "Voice of VPI,"

doing a noon 30-minute live telephone feed to a Roanoke radio station, 6 days a week. From there, the Sutherlands moved to College Station, TX, where Stu spent the next 4 years doing a multitude of Extension projects, including a "U.B. Safe" Pesticide Safety program using a "cute little umpire character."

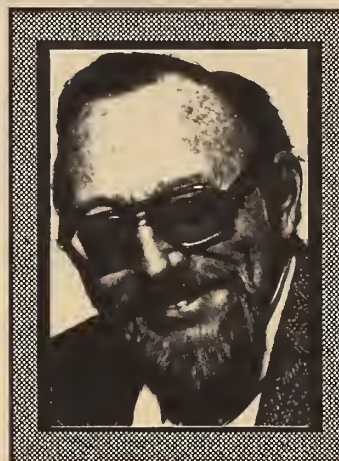
"Doing something right," says Stu, "gets folks to notice you." Out of the blue, USDA called. Wife Jean, two girls, and, by this time, a son, joined Stu to answer the Washington call. After working in a handful of USDA agencies, including ARS, he joined Extension communications in 1981.

4-H Is 4-Stu

For the past 6 or 7 years, Stu has attended

both the National 4-H Conference and National 4-H Congress, as the editor of the daily newsletter for each event. He has received a number of awards, but is proudest of the one recognizing him as the "grandfather" of the 4-H Master Communicators program, now gathering strength around the country. (But let's not get him started on the **GRANDFATHER** stuff!)

Stu produced the Administrator's *Current Developments* weekly newsletter for 3 years, and is currently the ES Freedom of Information Act officer, the Disaster Information contact, and, unofficially, the ES-USDA Poet Laureate. His retirement dream (growing ever more luminous) is to head for some sleepy little North Carolina community,



halfway between the beaches and the World's Most Wonderful Grandchildren, hook up his modem, and let his always-active imagination help him generate great novels.

Y

ou Can Be A Change Warrior

Communicators are in a good position to help affect change, known in many circles, including Extension, as being a **change agent**. But there is another title you, as media staff, may hold...**change warrior**. In the November/December 1989 issue of *Performance and Instruction*, authors **Esther S. Powers** and **John B. Duncan** explain the difference.

Experience Counts

A change warrior is an **experienced change agent** (someone who facilitates change) who has

special competencies in the orchestration of human variables. Managing strategic organizational change is actually the application of a complex process, learned as the result of participating in many change projects, and is an effective method of adult learning.

To be successful, change warriors need the following characteristics and competencies:

- commitment to endure, courage to act, and prowess in learning;
- ability to enable others to be effective leaders and to develop strategic and tactical plans;
- ability to gain followers;

- willingness to follow others, and discernment about when it is best to follow;
- ability to coach others through behavior change;
- ability to assess organizational effectiveness and dimensions that may need to change; and
- sense of humor, and of awe.

Communicators, Be Active!

With the many changes CES is experiencing, communicators can be very effective in helping program staff adjust to and embrace new approaches. Offering methods that use new technologies can be a bridge

from old to new methods of program delivery. Communicators can demonstrate to program staff, feeling swamped by new demands, how they can use these technologies to adapt, organize, manage, promote, and deliver educational programs tailored to Extension's new directions—with less effort than they thought possible!

A good change warrior is not just an agent, but can act as a mentor in helping others search for methods to bring about changes demanded by a fast-moving world.

N

ews After The Fact Can Still Be Fresh

Stu Sutherland

From a reporter's point of view, the annual National 4-H Conference is not front-page stuff. Conference youth delegates gather in Washington, DC, to help plan the future, and spend much of their time in group meetings trying to do so.

However, the Conference continues to get good nationwide coverage every year in daily and weekly hometown newspapers because CIT does a simple thing every

year—we prepare and give to each delegate a Conference-take-it-home-and-fill-in-the-blanks press release. Delegates love them, and frequently send clippings back to the National 4-H Council to prove the releases are working!

Becky Goes Further

Rebecca (Becky) Reed, a 17-year-old high school senior from Pampa, TX, went one step further this year. Becky sent two

clippings from the *Pampa News* to this year's Conference director, Jon Irby, of our ES 4-H and Youth Development staff. Both clippings had pictures taken at the Conference. One, a short article, was datelined College Station, and originated from the Extension information office on campus. The second, a longer article, was our fill-in release, which Becky used to generate a well written, 28-column-inch article. Double coverage!

Try It—You'll Like It

We suggest, if you don't already use this practice, that you try some fill-in, take-home releases for participants/delegates to state-level meetings and events. Structure releases loosely enough for each attendee to feel free to expand beyond the blanks and infuse him/herself into the copy. This makes the article more meaningful to hometown readers—and sells more newspapers.

T

en Commandments of Good Writing

(Continued from April 1990 Issue 2)

Here are the last five commandments for newswriters as compiled by writing coach and columnist Harry Levins.

Commandment No. 6— Avoid [unspecific] adjectives.

Many adjectives have two problems. First, they're subjective. "This is a beautiful view." Says who? And in what context? Is a view from a mountain beautiful to someone with vertigo?

Second, some adjectives are maddeningly vague: "The little boy clutched a huge ice cream cone." Well, how little is little? And how huge is huge? Don't tell the reader...show the reader. The reader, given facts, will supply the mental image. "The 4-year-old

boy clutched his 3-scoop ice cream cone."

Commandment No. 7— Avoid adverbs.

Like adjectives, adverbs tend to be subjective: "I'll stay in my home as long as they let me," she said bravely. We may know what she said, but only she knows her frame of mind. Second, adverbs get in the way of strong verbs. We can write that someone "walked briskly into court," or we can write that the same somebody "strode into court" or "marched into court." We can write that the police "spoke angrily" to protesters, or that they "barked" at protesters.

Finally, adverbs strike me as quaintly Victorian. Maybe it's just me, but I think adverbs give our English a musty odor, just like an old house. They

make me think of all those *Tom Swift* jokes—he said, humorously.

Commandment No. 8— Get to the point.

Once upon a time a news lead followed the journalistic "W"s, even if it meant using 50 or 60 words to get them all in. Crowded leads often dumped too many facts on the reader too soon. Today, we do things differently. Nowadays we may open a story by setting the scene, or with an anecdote. But the story's point should be made by the third paragraph, or you'll lose the readers' interest.

Commandment No. 9— Before you write, think.

Before you touch the keyboard, ask yourself two questions:

- What, exactly, am I trying to say?
- What's the clearest, simplest way to say it?

Commandment No. 10— After you write, read.

If it **sounds** "clunky," it probably **is**. The best way to know if something sounds "clunky" is to read it aloud.

You should consider as an 11th commandment that, at any given point, for reasons too numerous to contemplate, you may need to throw out one or more of these 10. Also, there are probably as many other commandments as there are other writers. The list is potentially endless.

D

owElanco Uses Videos to Instruct Customers

Recently, the mailman brought the **Fred Selberg** family, of Harwood, ND, a videotape on how to protect groundwater from chemicals used on the farm. The tape was not from EPA or USDA. It was from DowElanco, a leading agricultural chemical manufacturer, who mailed the videos to 65,000 farm families who

own VCR's and use DowElanco products.

No Hard Sell—But Gets Attention

Dick Parent, DowElanco corporate communications, says this video is one of four tapes on current topics the company is direct-mailing to customers. He says their intent is to present issues,

not hardsell the product. In fact, this tape contains no product information—just a product mention at the end of the tape.

Parent says they are pleased with this effort, and believe the tapes are being used. After sending a video on herbicide carryover to soybean growers in the Midwest, 300 recipients were surveyed. The survey indi-

cates 85 percent watched the tape the day they received it.

Clancy Stock, visiting professor of journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, confirms this belief. "Farmers do watch the videos, even if they contain advertising," says Stock. That, he says, may change "when the novelty wears off."

CIT

Offers Coping Tips

Jodi Horigan

The Communication, Information, and Technology (CIT) staff recently held a 1-day workshop to learn where we've been since our last workshop, where we are, and where we're going.

Prior to the workshop, committee members asked staff to share "Tricks of the Trade"—hints that help individuals cope with work, stress, and relationships. We want to share them with you, and if you have "Tricks" you'd like to tell us, we'd like to hear them.

- Use the last 5 or 10 minutes of each workday to jot down projects/assignments to complete the next day. Use the list as a road map to stay on track with projects, stay better organized, and manage priorities.
- At the end of the day, add to your "to do" list things you've already accomplished but were un-

planned, and then cross them out. This gives a psychological boost, showing you that you can work in "surprise" tasks among planned ones and still survive!

- Mix tasks to keep energy and production up. Bear in mind what time of day your energy level is at its peak and schedule tedious tasks for that time when tedium is not so overwhelming. Likewise, save a task you enjoy for those slump periods when you need to be mentally energized.
- Use pictorial or color coding for similar records. Picture code categories of work and put the picture on your working folders and, when you can, on related material (charts, graphs, etc.). Color code working files according to the status of the work—high, medium, low priority—or files that must be held, but are essentially

"dead." Using pictorial or color coding eliminates the need to read before selecting or opening a folder.

- Whenever possible, handle each piece of paper **ONCE** when it comes across your desk. Read it, determine the action needed, act on it, and dispense with it. Remember: each time you pick up the same piece of paper, you repeat at least **some** of these steps. That wastes a lot of time!
- Get out of the building at lunchtime. Sit on a park bench and people-watch or attend a special or inspirational program when offered. This can clear a lot of cobwebs and relieve mounting tension. Fresh air will help combat "after-lunch slump."
- When you run across a problem area—work or personal—write down how you feel about the problem in a small notebook. Looking at your feelings in black and white sometimes helps you sort out and view problems from a different perspective.
- Write important notes on something different from the usual paper that can shuffle in among other, similar papers. One staff member saves shirt cardboards for really important self-messages.
- Keep a daily accomplishment log in your computer. You can modify it and use it for periodic accomplishment reports to supervisors, when requested.
- If your computer misbehaves, and you've tried everything else, **shut it down**, count to 10, and power up again.
- Create a FAX template and store it in your computer directory. This allows you to prepare your cover sheet before you go to your FAX machine. This is especially handy for people who have indecipherable handwriting!

Contributors—May 1990 (Issue 1)

Patricia Calvert
Jodi Horigan
Janet Poley

Stu Sutherland
Tom Willis

CITExtension Publication Staff

Managing Editor	Janet Poley
Editor	Jodi Horigan
Design	Tom Poore
Reproduction/Distribution	Joyce Calvaruso
Staff Artist	Myron Johnson

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